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INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE
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RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 1906
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NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/GAVITO/YERGER
STATE FOR NEA/IPA; NEA/RA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/20/2017
TAGS: [AMGT](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [LE](#)
SUBJECT: LEBANON: ANNAPOLIS INVITATION DELIVERED;
DELEGATION LIST REMAINS UNCERTAIN

REF: A. A. SECSTATE 158852

[1](#)B. B. BEIRUT 1807

Classified By: DCM William Grant for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

GOL WILL ATTEND BUT REMAINS UNSURE ON DELEGATION

[1](#)1. (S) The DCM and PolOff presented reftel A invitation and talking points to Acting Foreign Minister Tareq Mitri on November 21. Since we first raised the issue with Mitri on November 19 (reftel B), Prime Minister Fouad Siniora had sought the agreement of resigned yet in-office Foreign Minister Fawzi Salloukh to have the Lebanese delegation to Annapolis be composed of the Lebanese Charge d'Affaires to the U.S., the Charge d'Affaires to the UN and, to represent the Shia community, the Lebanese Ambassador to Belgium and the EU. According to Mitri, Salloukh expressed his opposition to sending anyone to the conference, in particular the two Charges d'Affaires, and even stronger opposition to the Shia representative. Salloukh claimed in the local press on November 21 that no decision has been taken regarding Annapolis and that Lebanon will wait until after the Arab League meets in Cairo on November 22, at which time the Arab League countries will presumably agree on attendance. Despite this, Mitri was confident that the GOL will find a way to send at least the two Charges and perhaps even himself to represent Lebanon in Annapolis. Lebanon's decision-making on this issue continues to be complicated by the impasse over selection of a new president. The term of the current president ends at midnight November 23 and there is no consensus on his replacement. The parliament is next scheduled to meet on this issue the afternoon of November 23.

POSSIBLE SCENARIOS

[1](#)2. (S) Mitri believed that, at a minimum, Lebanon would send Antoine Chedid, the Charge d'Affaires to the U.S., and possibly Nawaf Salam, the Charge d'Affaires to the UN, even if Salloukh did not agree. If a president is elected by the deadline of midnight on November 23, Mitri would immediately seek the president's decision to authorize Chedid and Salam to attend. If no president is elected by the deadline, the cabinet by law takes on the powers of the presidency. Although a cabinet in this situation would be expected to actually exercise few of the presidential powers to avoid charges of usurping prerogatives, Mitri thought the cabinet would authorize the Chedid and Salam, or Mitri himself, to go to Annapolis. Mitri believes his own participation could be

made legitimate with a unanimous cabinet decision. An important factor in all of this is the meeting of Arab states in Cairo on November 22, prior to Annapolis. If there is a strong sentiment there that Arab states should attend Annapolis, that will strengthen the position of the GOL that it should send a delegation despite the political confusion in Beirut. If Mitri attended, he would be the principal, and Chedid and another Washington-based diplomat would accompany him. (Note: We are currently pursuing the visa requirements for Mitri. End note.)

13. (S) Mitri concluded by saying that the GOL cannot know until Saturday, November 24, who will attend the conference.

BIO INFO

14. (U) Possible Principal: Acting Foreign Minister Tareq Mitri (addressed as: Your Excellency)

AKA: Tarek Mitri

Gender: Male

DOB: September 16, 1950

POB: Tripoli, Lebanon

Visa status: Currently has G2 visa expiring May 20, 2008.

Will need to apply for B1/B2 visa.

FELTMAN